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Surface Warfare Officers School Graduates International Students

NEWPORT, R.I. – Surface Warfare Officers School (SWOS) graduated sixteen international naval officers from the Division Officer and Department Head courses during a ceremony in the Admiral Michael G. Mullen Auditorium July 27.

Students from Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Bulgaria, Morocco, and Thailand graduated during the ceremony and were representative of the more than 150 allied nations sending military students through selected courses at training centers and schools throughout the Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) domain.

“The mission of the international program at SWOS is simple,” said Capt. Richard A. Brown, SWOS commanding officer. “Create the foundation for building trust through knowledge sharing for the purposes of international partnership and global security. The program is designed to foster international cooperation and prepare officers to serve at-sea, world-wide, through professional education and knowledge sharing.”

During their stay, students were immersed in the school’s mission of preparing professional military officers to serve in afloat billets. The course

emphasizes multi-threat warfare, combat information center equipment, special maneuvering, and navigation.

"Our international students were taught how to plan, coordinate, and manage the supervision of all combat information center operations and training during routine peacetime steaming," said Lt. Cmdr. Jody Mandeville, director of international SWOS. "The school's high-tech conning officer virtual environment (COVE) and full mission bridge simulators gave the students a greater understanding of ship handling."

The students shared the same facilities and instructors with students from the U.S. and like their American counterparts, used the same modern classrooms and high-tech virtual reality trainers. The technology, along with hands-on training, is used to broaden the scope of the students' surface warfare knowledge, and ranges from basic seamanship to complex maritime operations.

Social and cultural events are included in the curriculum. Each student was assigned a sponsor to introduce them to American culture and foster personal relationships. During their free time, the sponsors hosted students in their homes, took them to movies and gave them opportunities to experience American culture in an informal setting.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the cross-cultural exchange I experienced with the two Tunisian naval officers my family and I sponsored," said Lt. Cmdr. Greg Adams, a SWOS instructor and one of several American families that sponsored International Students. "I learned as much from them about Tunisia, as I hoped they learned from spending time with my family."

The international students also participated in field studies programs designed to promote an understanding of American society, its institutions, ideals and overarching commitment to basic principles of human rights. Trips included lectures at Salve Regina University, social gatherings with international students attending the U.S. Naval War College, and a Newport history and mansions tour.

SWOS is headquartered in Newport, R.I. and oversees nine learning sites which provide more than 1,000 courses a year to more than 67,000 Sailors. SWOS uses a mix of blended-learning techniques comprised of instructor-led classes, hands-on labs, simulation and computer-based training. Courses include specialized training supporting all enlisted engineering ratings, and SWOs at every level. Building maritime partnerships, the command also provides training to many international students.

For more information about Surface Warfare Officers School, visit <https://www.netc.navy.mil/centers/swos/>.

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To learn more about the Naval Education and Training Command, visit <https://www.netc.navy.mil>.

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